

Hawaiian Gazette

VOL. XXII.—No. 23.

HONOLULU, TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 1887.

WHOLE No. 1169

Hawaiian Gazette

PUBLISHED BY
HAWAIIAN GAZETTE CO., (Limited),
Every Tuesday Morning,
AT FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM
PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.
Foreign Subscribers \$6.00 in Advance,
Which includes postage prepaid.

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Hawaiian Gazette

TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 1887.

Masonic Banquet

On Thursday evening last a banquet was given at the Hawaiian Hotel in honor of the M. W. Grand Master Edmund G. Atkinson and the visiting Masons. The banquet was given by the two local lodges, Hawaiian Lodge No. 21 and Lodge Le Progres de l'Océanie, who were represented by their officers and a number of their leading members.

Shortly after 5.30 p. m., the M. W. Grand Master entered the hotel parlor and took his station on the east side, having his Majesty on his left and the Past Masters present grouped on both sides of him, the W. M. of Hawaiian Lodge, J. M. Monsarrat standing a little in front and to the right of the M. W. Grand Master. The officers of both lodges were ranged around the room, according to their rank, the Wardens standing on the south and the deacons on the west side of the parlor.

Past Master Hassinger, well known for his urbanity and thorough knowledge of his duties, acted as master of ceremonies.

The brethren were received at the door by him, and introduced by W. M. Monsarrat to the M. W. Grand Master. The reception over, the company passed into the dining room, where a handsome collation was spread.

At the upper end of the room was an inscription with the words: "Welcome, Grand Master," at the other end another reading, "Welcome, Visiting Brethren." Both were framed with fragrant leis, and were the work of Geo. Strateneyer, who deserves great credit for the artistic manner in which both devices were executed.

The Royal Hawaiian Band was in the band stand, and executed a variety of music in their usual manner. A visiting Mason remarked: "We have not the equal of this band in San Francisco."

W. M. Monsarrat presided at the banquet, having on his right the King and on his left the M. W. Grand Master.

After about an hour spent in refreshing the inner man, W. M. Monsarrat rising said: "Your Majesty and Brethren—We have met here this evening to do honor to a most distinguished guest, the Most Worshipful Edmund G. Atkinson, Grand Master of Masons of California, and also to do honor to the visiting brethren of the Masonic excursion who accompany him. The members of Lodge Le Progres and the Hawaiian Lodge unite with me in extending to you a fraternal greeting. Although Masonry has flourished in this Kingdom during the last thirty-seven years or thereabouts, this is the first occasion in our history upon which the craft have had the honor of receiving a visit from a Grand Master. We deeply appreciate that honor, and I am sure that the members of Hawaiian Lodge and Lodge Le Progres and all the Masons of this Kingdom will unite with me in extending to you a cordial welcome. We are proud to be able to entertain you. Your Majesty and brethren, I give you the health of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, and will call upon him to respond to the sentiment." Freemasonry and the Hawaiian Islands.

The toast having been responded to with great enthusiasm, the W. M. Grand Master with the eloquence for which he is well known, responded and said: "Your Majesty, Brother Master of Ceremonies, and Brethren of the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons—I have the honor to say that there comes a time in the life of every man when the heart swells with emotions which the tongue cannot express. Full well do I know the truth of that saying for I recognize that that time with me is the present. When I take into consideration all the circumstances and conditions of my life, and when I look back upon the past, and when I look forward to the future, and when I think of the Hawaiian Islands, when I recall the untiring efforts of the officers of the good ship Australia to minister to the comfort and pleasure of myself and those who accompany me, when I remember the very cordial and hospitable reception accorded to our party by the brethren of Hawaiian Lodge, when I survey the magnificent scene now before me in the poverty of my language I can find no words adequate to express the sentiments I entertain. I stand before you to utter the simple words 'I thank you' but simple and plain as those words may seem, I assure you that they come from the depths of a grateful heart. 'We meet to-night as brethren of the Mystic Tie, and though our homes are far apart, though oceans have rolled between us, yet when we meet and clasp hands in fraternal greeting we feel the influence of that magic vinculum which binds heart to heart and soul to soul. We meet as members of an ancient and honorable Order, and we have existing from time immemorial, honorable as tending to make all men so who are strictly obedient to the precepts it enjoins, an order whose principles are coeval with light itself and as old as the hills that look down upon us.

As we look back in the dawn of history there existed a brotherhood of builders, who were both operative and speculative masons. They wrought at the building of the Temple of Solomon and the most magnificent structures of the age in which they lived. They dedicated the works of their hands to the Supreme God, and Master of the Universe, and offered up their devotions to the Everliving God. Rome's five hundred temples, her hundred monuments to the deities, her coliseum, her triumphal arch and her four score gates were the works of their hands. That great military road which led from Rome to the ocean, and over which the conquering host of Marcus Aurelius and the Emperor Trajan was built by those ancient masons. And within the last few years there have come from beneath that ancient road excavations bearing upon their surface the symbols of masonry. Those ancient brethren traveled throughout the countries of the east building monuments and monuments, and the towers. Traces of their early handiwork may still be found from the sunny slopes of France and Italy to the snow-clad hills of Imperial Russia, and still other specimens of lesser magnitude in the ruined castles of the nobility of other days on the Rhine, the Cathedral of Strasbourg, the world's masterpiece of architecture, that great grand poem telling to the ages the story of man's long endeavor to worship God in the most enduring form that hand could execute or mind conceive—was the work of our ancient brethren. That stupendous edifice, though buffeted by the storms of seven centuries, stands today in unapproachable sublimity, and upon its lofty turret-moors still hangs her rosy wreath and eve her crimson veil. But these structures, magnificent as they are, must, like their builders, yield to the ravages of decay; the gnawing tooth of time shall feed upon their substance, and the insatiable ivy shall fatten upon their dust, for

"The stately mansion man can raise,
Is the ivy's food at last."

But when the last trace of the work of those builders shall have been obliterated

from the face of the earth, the humanitarian principles which they propagated, the lessons of love which they taught—love to God and man—shall go down the ages, strengthened by the rolling years to guide, protect and bless mankind. To cherish and perpetuate the sublime principles propagated by our ancient brethren, and to spread the light which kindled upon their altars is the work of the Grand Lodge of California, and I, as the presiding officer of that grand body, am proud to stand before you to-night and declare that with all the strength that within me lies I will work for the good of our Order, and for the welfare of my fellow men."

The speaker again feelingly referred to the hospitality shown by the brethren of the Hawaiian Islands, and on behalf of the recipients tendered expressions of gratitude. He passed a handsome compliment upon Honolulu in the following terms:

"I shall never forget the sensation which I experienced on our good ship rounded Diamond Head, and standing upon the hurricane deck with a glass to my eye, and as I beheld your beautiful city nestled among oceanic groves and surrounded by everlasting hills, I recalled the lines of the poet Alington Charles Swinburne:

"In a cove of a cliff between lowland and high,
By the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round by the rocks of an inland island,
A beautiful bay, as the sea."

"In conclusion he reminded the brethren of a striking evidence of what the traditions taught them—that monarchs had not thought it derogatory to their dignity to meet with the fraternity and join in their festivities—and then gave the sentiment: "Long life and health to His Majesty the King."

The Master in response said: "Worshipful Master, Brethren and Gentlemen, I now come to thank you for the kind and cordial manner in which you have drunk my health, and for the kindly spirit which you have manifested. I am sure that this occasion has established between us more friendly relations than previously existed. The occasion must necessarily be a very pleasant one when we receive such men as the Grand Master and brethren of California. (Applause.) It pleases us much to see the visiting brethren and to give them a fraternal shake of the hand. The event of their visit to the Islands marks an epoch in the history of these Islands that gives us greatly to enjoy their company, and we hope during their short stay to do all in our power to make their sojourn a happy one. I will not speak at greater length, as there are seven toasts on the least, but I wish to call upon you to the toast with much aplomb, but not to respond to it owing to the absence through indisposition of His Excellency Merrill."

The Master next proposed the toast: "California and the Hawaiian Islands—their